

LASSEN COUNTY ADULT DETENTION FACILITY

Reason for Inquiry: The California Penal Code 919(b) mandates that the Grand Jury “inquire into the condition and management of all detention facilities within their county.”

Inquiry Procedures: The Grand Jury toured the Lassen County Adult Detention Facility (LCADF). Members walked through the facility with the presence of command staff.

Background: The LCADF is located on Sheriff Cady Lane in Susanville California near the Lassen County Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF) and next door to the Lassen County Sheriff's Office. The current facility was built in 1991 to house both county and state inmates.

Facility:

The kitchen was clean and well organized. The culinary staff is assisted by 12-18 inmates per shift, two shifts each day. The kitchen provides thousands of meals per year to LCADF and JDF.

The equipment in the kitchen with the exception of a new oven is old and in need of replacement. One of the steam jacketed kettles used for preparing soups and other meals is slow to heat and at times pops the circuit breakers. Another steam kettle does not work. The dish washer is outdated and is repaired on a monthly basis.

The grills have no knobs and do not heat evenly. We were informed exposed electrical wires, when they get wet, also cause the circuit breaker(s) to trip.

The LCADF heating and air conditioning system does not function properly. We were told by staff that the heating system is either “on or off”. The thermostats’ throughout the building do not control the desired temperature causing inmate complaints about being too cold or too warm. The heating system currently needs to be “manually” turned on or off from inside the facility maintenance shop.

The Grand Jury members were told the control boards which allow inmate movement and the locking and un-locking of doors throughout the facility are outdated and replacement parts for them are becoming more difficult to locate.

While walking through the facility we observed numerous water stains on the interior of the roof, lounge and inside the inmate dorm areas. The water stains were reportedly from design flaws and twenty-years of weather exposure.

The LCADF operates a motor pool program on the site for county vehicles. A crew of approximately 6-12 inmates works inside the area.

The LCADF operates an outside state inmate work crew consisting of 8-12 inmates who work in the community completing various work projects, snow removal, fire breaks and other tasks.

The crew works at different sites throughout the county and completes many hours of service for the Bureau of Land Management, United States Forest Service, City of Susanville and many other agencies.

At present only one state inmate crew is being operated. In years past, LCADF utilized two state inmate crews and one county crew throughout Lassen County.

Staffing: The LCADF has a staff of approximately sixty employees. This consists of sworn and non-sworn staff. At the time of our visit LCADF had one correctional officer vacancy. Two correctional officer vacancies have been frozen as a result of the 2009-2010 budgets. A teaching position was also vacant during our tour.

All correctional officers are required to obtain 176 hours of CORE training at a cost of approximately \$1,600 per staff member. This is one-time required training for each new correctional officer. Each correctional officer is required to receive 24 hours of training each year as set forth by the California Department of Corrections and Standards Authority. Training records are audited every year by Corrections Standards Authority and have received an above average report each year.

Staffing Equipment: While speaking with LCADF staff, it was observed, the majority of the staff carried only one piece of personal protection equipment. None of the officers carried collapsible batons and some did not even carry some type of chemical agents for protection. While walking through the Special Housing Unit, which houses pre-sentenced and sentenced inmates on various violent and non-violent charges, members of the Grand Jury observed a lone officer in charge of the unit. The only personal protection was a small can of chemical agent.

Recommendations: The Sheriff's Office should seek funding for upgrades and replacement of worn out equipment in the facilities kitchen area. The Sheriff's Office should seek funding to upgrade the twenty-year old facility in regards to the HVAC system, roof, control boards and overall repairs that are needed.

The Sheriff's Office should provide adequate levels of personal protection equipment for its staff as well as the required training.

Response Required: Yes.